

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Claim 1. (*Currently Amended*) A method of manufacturing an article of footwear comprising an upper and a sole, said method comprising:

assembling the upper on the sole;

preparing a quantity of flexible or semi-rigid polymer in a liquid state by diluting the polymer in a solvent;

applying at least one layer of the flexible or semi-rigid liquid polymer in predetermined areas of the upper, said predetermined areas constituting less than an entirety of the upper;

drying the article of ~~footwear~~ footwear;

the method of manufacturing thereby resulting in less than the entirety of the upper having a polymer coating.

Claim 2. (*Previously Presented*) A method of manufacturing an article of footwear according to claim 1, wherein said applying of the polymer comprises applying the polymer with a brush.

Claim 3. (*Previously Presented*) A method of manufacturing an article of footwear according to claim 1, wherein said applying of the polymer comprises applying the polymer by spraying.

Claim 4. (*Previously Presented*) A method of manufacturing an article of footwear according to claim 1, wherein said applying the polymer comprises applying the polymer so as to straddle the upper and the sole.

Claim 5. (*Canceled*)

Claim 6. (*Previously Presented*) A method of manufacturing an article of footwear according to claim 1, further comprising liquefying the polymer by heating.

Claim 7. (*Previously Presented*) A method of manufacturing an article of footwear according to claim 1, wherein the polymer comprises one of the following polymers: latex, polyurethane, PVC, silicone, polyamide, synthetic rubber, thermoplastic-base impact polystyrene.

Claim 8. (*Currently Amended*) An article of footwear comprising:  
an upper and an outer sole, said upper being assembled on said sole;  
at least one layer of flexible or semi-rigid polymer having been applied in a liquid state to coat predetermined areas of the upper, said predetermined areas constituting less than an entirety of the upper, whereafter said polymer is allowed to dry and less than the entirety of the upper has a polymer coating.

Claim 9. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 8, wherein the polymer layer comprises a strip applied to said upper and said outer sole to simultaneously straddle said upper and said outer sole.

Claim 10. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 9, wherein the polymer comprises one of the following polymers: latex, polyurethane, PVC, silicone, polyamide, synthetic rubber, thermoplastic-base impact polystyrene.

Claim 11. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 10, wherein the upper comprises a mesh material.

Claim 12. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 11, wherein the upper comprises a three-dimensional mesh material.

Claim 13. (*Currently Amended*) A method of manufacturing an article of footwear, said method comprising:

assembling an upper onto an outer sole, said upper comprising an aeratable material, said aeratable material of said upper having an outer side and an inner side;

preparing a quantity of liquid polymer by diluting a polymer in a solvent;

applying at least one layer of the liquid polymer to less than an entirety of said outer side of said aeratable material of said upper to thereby allow ventilation through said aeratable material after completion of manufacture of the article of footwear;

drying said article of ~~footwear~~ footwear;

the method of manufacturing thereby resulting in less than the entirety of the upper having a polymer coating.

Claim 14. (*Previously Presented*) A method of manufacturing an article of footwear according to claim 13, wherein:

said aeratable material comprises a three-dimensional mesh material, said three-dimensional mesh material comprising a pair of spaced-apart layers of mesh fabric and an elastically compressible air space between said pair of spaced-apart layers.

Claim 15. (*Previously Presented*) A method of manufacturing an article of footwear according to claim 13, wherein:

said aeratable material comprises a three-dimensional mesh material, said three-dimensional mesh material comprising a pair of spaced-apart layers of mesh fabric and a fibrous layer between said pair of spaced-apart layers.

Claim 16. (*Currently Amended*) A method of manufacturing an article of footwear according to claim 13, wherein:

said applying at least one layer of a liquid polymer to less than an entirety of said outer side of said upper comprises applying said polymer to create a polymer layer having an upper edge extending along a line varying in height along a length of said upper.

Claim 17. (*Previously Presented*) A method of manufacturing an article of footwear according to claim 16, wherein:

said upper edge of said polymer layer rises in height at least along a rear of said upper.

Claim 18. (*Previously Presented*) A method of manufacturing an article of footwear according to claim 13, further comprising:

applying said at least one layer of said liquid polymer to less than an entirety of said sole, whereby said layer of liquid polymer covers a junction between said upper and said sole.

Claim 19. (*Currently Amended*) A method of manufacturing an article of footwear, said method comprising:

assembling an upper onto an outer sole, said upper comprising an aeratable material, said aeratable material of said upper having an outer side and an inner side;

preparing a quantity of liquid polymer by diluting a polymer in a solvent;

applying at least one layer of the liquid polymer to said outer side of said aeratable material of said upper to create a polymer layer having an upper edge extending along a line varying in height along a length of said upper;

drying said article of ~~footwear~~ footwear;

the method of manufacturing thereby resulting in less than the entirety of the upper having a polymer coating.

Claim 20. (*Previously Presented*) A method of manufacturing an article of footwear according to claim 19, wherein:

said upper edge of said polymer layer rises in height at least along a rear of said upper.

Claim 21. (*Currently Amended*) An article of footwear comprising:

- an outer sole;
- an upper affixed to said outer sole, said upper comprising an aeratable material, said aeratable material of said upper having an outer side and an inner side;
- at least one layer of a polymer covering less than an entirety of said outer side of said aeratable material of said upper to thereby allow ventilation through said aeratable material, whereby less than the entirety of the upper has a polymer coating.

Claim 22. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 21, wherein:

- said aeratable material comprises a three-dimensional mesh material, said three-dimensional mesh material comprising a pair of spaced-apart layers of mesh fabric and a fibrous layer between said pair of spaced-apart layers.

Claim 23. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 21, wherein:

- said aeratable material comprises a three-dimensional mesh material, said three-dimensional mesh material comprising a pair of spaced-apart layers of mesh fabric and an elastically compressible air space between said pair of spaced-apart layers.

Claim 24. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 21, wherein:

- said at least one layer of a polymer comprises an upper edge extending along a line varying in height along a length of said upper.

Claim 25. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 24, wherein:  
said upper edge of said polymer layer rises in height at least along a rear of said upper.

Claim 26. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 21, wherein:  
said at least one layer of polymer also covers less than an entirety of said sole,  
whereby said layer of polymer covers a junction between said upper and said sole.

Claim 27. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 21, wherein:  
said polymer is latex.

Claim 28. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 21, wherein:  
said polymer is polyurethane.

Claim 29. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 21, wherein:  
said polymer is PVC.

Claim 30. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 21, wherein:  
said polymer is silicone.

Claim 31. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 21, wherein:  
said polymer is polyamide.

Claim 32. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 21, wherein:  
said polymer is synthetic rubber.

Claim 33. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 21, wherein:  
said polymer is a thermoplastic-base impact polystyrene.

Claim 34. (*Currently Amended*) An article of footwear comprising:  
an outer sole;  
an upper affixed to said outer sole, said upper comprising an aeratable material,  
said aeratable material of said upper having an outer side and an inner side;  
at least one layer of a polymer affixed to said outer side of said aeratable material  
of said upper, said layer of polymer having an upper edge extending along a line varying in  
height along a length of said ~~upper~~ upper;  
less than an entirety of the upper having a polymer coating.

Claim 35. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 34, wherein:  
said upper edge of said polymer layer rises in height at least along a rear of said  
upper.